THE NATURE OF THE PLANNING ENVIRONMENT: AND THE EFFECTS OF GUIDANCE, ORGANIZATION AND AUTHORITY

A Monograph

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This monograph focuses on the nature of the planning environment The monograph argues that the Bush Administration did not provide those charged with post-conflict planning within the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), clear guidance, proper organizational structure, or the authority needed to accomplish their mission. While SAMS graduates can do little to change the structure of the US government or the nature of the problems that lead to a lack of guidance, organizational structure, and authority; they can better prepare themselves to operate in these environments by sharpening their skills in appreciative intelligence, social intelligence, and sense-making. It is these skills that allowed the planners in 2003 to overcome the insurmountable odds, and it will be these skills that enable future planners to do the same.

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ABSTRACT

THE NATURE OF THE PLANNING ENVIRONMENT: AND THE EFFECTS OF GUIDANCE, ORGANIZATION AND AUTHORITY, by Major Charles P. Bris-Bois III, 48 pages.

In early 2001, it became clear to the Bush administration that the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq were beginning to fail and the United States military faced unacceptable risk in the enforcement of the North and South no-fly zones. In the midst of the administration's debate over possible actions that could be taken against Iraq, terrorists attacked the United States on September 9, 2001. This event hardened the belief among many in the administration that Iraq had to be dealt with as soon as the Taliban was removed from Afghanistan. Various levels of planning for the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime began throughout the interagency in late 2001 and continued throughout 2002; this monograph focuses on the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, an organization created within the Department of Defense to "operationalize" the planning that had already been accomplished. Using interviews, primary sources, numerous firsthand accounts, and journal articles, this monograph focuses on the nature of the planning environment and the obstacles faced by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Polk, a School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) graduate, and lead planner for the organization. As we recognize the tenth anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq, it is important to study the lessons learned by the men and women who faced almost insurmountable odds in trying to plan for and execute the rebuilding of Iraq after major combat operations. This monograph argues that the Bush Administration did not provide those charged with post-conflict planning, clear guidance, proper organizational structure, or the authority needed to accomplish their mission. While SAMS graduates can do little to change the structure of the US government or the nature of the problems that lead to a lack of guidance, organizational structure, and authority; they can better prepare themselves to operate in these environments by sharpening their skills in appreciative intelligence, social intelligence, and sense-making. It is these skills that allowed the planners in 2003 to overcome the insurmountable odds, and it will be these skills that enable future planners to do the same.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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[1]William Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India: 1942-1945* (London, Cooper Square Press, 2000).

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ACRONYMS

CARL	Combined Arms Research Library
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CFLCC	Combined Forces Land Component Commander
CGSC	U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
JTF	Joint Task Force
MMAS	Master of Military Art and Science
SAMS	School of Advanced Military Studies
ORHA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

In the late summer of 2012, Colonel Thomas Graves addressed the incoming class of the

School for Advanced Military Studies. In his opening remarks, he told the assembled officers that

graduates of the course would be the first ones called when crises occurred. He described how

one day graduates might be at home reading the newspaper, and notice a small blurb buried

beneath the fold in the back of the paper describing a new conflict in some far corner of the world

that few people have ever heard of and even fewer can find on a map. "The next day," he told the

students, "you may very well be on a plane headed for that far-off corner of the world as a lead

planner."[2] As he continued the story, he explained to students that the problems they faced when

they got to that far corner of the world would not have straightforward answers. There are no

textbook solutions for such complex problems, especially when there is limited and often

conflicting information upon which to base recommendations and decisions. In today's

vernacular, these are called wicked or ill-structured problems.[3] Graves told the students that

graduates of the Advanced Military Studies School were expected to be comfortable in

environments full of ambiguity and uncertainty and that if they worked hard, the year of study

they were about to embark on would prepare them well for when they found themselves in that

far off corner of the world trying to solve problems of the utmost national importance.

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[2]Colonel Thomas Graves, "Introduction" [opening remarks to the students of Class 13-01, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, Ks. June 26, 2012].

[3]The term "wicked problem" was first coined by Rittle and Webber in a 1973 paper entitled *Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*. The authors listed 17 characteristics that made wicked problems different from normal linear problems that can be identified and solved using the scientific method. Jeremy Blackham, "Dealing with "Wicked Problems", *RUSI Journal* 152, no.4 (Aug 2007): 36-38.

Lieutenant Colonel Robert B. Polk, a School of Advanced Military Studies graduate and Graves' classmate, found himself in just such a position in late 2002 as the United States prepared for the invasion of Iraq. Polk had just finished a fellowship at the Foreign Service Institute and was headed for a planning job on the Pentagon's Army Staff, when the Department of Defense announced the creation of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance. Overnight, his assignment to the Army Staff was cancelled and he was re-routed to the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance to fill the organization's requirement for a graduate of the School of Advanced Military Studies.[4]

One week after the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, President George Bush told British Prime Minister Tony Blair, "We must deal with [the Taliban] first. But when we have dealt with Afghanistan, we must come back to Iraq."[5] Throughout 2002, the Bush administration built the case for removing Saddam Hussein from power. At the same time US Central Command Commander, General Tommy R. Franks built the invasion plan for Iraq, Douglas Feith, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy within the Pentagon, argued that the American Military should be responsible for post-war Iraq as well. National Security Presidential Directive-24, signed in late January 2003, gave the undersecretary the responsibility he desired. As a result of the directive, Feith created the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance and tasked it with building the plan to reform Iraq's political, economic and security sectors.[6] Feith hired Retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner to run the organization. Based on the Central Command timeline for the invasion, Garner had less than three months to

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[4]Bob Polk, interviewed by author, Washington DC, 14 March 2012.

[5]Lou Cannon and Carl M. Cannon, *Reagan's Disciple: George W. Bush's Troubled Quest for a Presidential Legacy* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 189.

[6]Gordon Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq: Regime Change, Jay Garner, and the ORHA Story* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 99.

build his team, coordinate the interagency, deploy to Iraq, and plan the rebuilding of a nation destroyed by twenty years of sanctions and war.

The invasion began on March 19, 2003, proceeding from Kuwait with the US Army V Corps in the west and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in the east. Bypassing the major cities, the forces were able to race to the outskirts of Baghdad in four days. Over the next few days, Colonel David Perkins' 2nd Brigade Combat Team made several Thunder Runs, culminating in the 2nd Brigade's capture of the Presidential Palace in the heart of Baghdad. On April 9, 2003, the statue of Saddam Hussein was pulled down in Firdos Square and on 1 May 2003, President Bush declared the end of major combat operations.[7]

Polk arrived in Baghdad on April 21, 2003, two weeks after the city fell and a week before the President gave his "Mission Accomplished" speech. Increasing levels of violence prevented the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance staff from venturing out into Bagdad and a majority of the ministries they were responsible for re-establishing had been looted.[8] Amongst the chaos, Garner and his organization were able to accomplish very little. Four days after their arrival, Secretary Donald Rumsfeld informed Garner that the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance would be shut down and replaced by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), led by Ambassador L. Paul Bremer.[9] The majority of those that worked for the Garner left Iraq demoralized and defeated after the transition. Most felt that they

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[7]Anthony Cordesman, *The Iraq War* (Washington DC: Praeger, 2003), 60; Michael Gordon, Bernard E. Trainor, and Craig Wasson, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York, Pantheon, 2006), 402; Tommy Franks and Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 523.

[8]Gordon et al., *Cobra II*, 469.

[9]George Packer, *Assassins' Gate* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 144. Although, Garner had been told from the very beginning that he would be replaced by an U.S. Embassy Ambassador as soon as the humanitarian relief was complete, he did not expect to be replaced so soon.

had been poorly supported by Washington, due to interagency bickering, a refusal to provide resources, and the Pentagon's push to rapidly remove forces from Iraq.[10] Bob Polk was one of the few who stayed beyond the first weeks of the transition and was accepted by Bremer as part of the new staff.[11]

On 12 May 2003, Ambassador Bremer arrived in Baghdad and immediately instituted changes in the administration of post-conflict Iraq that would negate many of the most important planning assumptions made by Jay Garner's staff. Instead of restarting the Iraqi ministries with existing bureaucrats, Bremer, through Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1, banned the top four levels of Ba'athists from serving in government positions.[12] Order Number 2, issued four days later, dissolved the Iraqi Army, which Garner's team was planning to use to provide the much-needed internal security.[13] Most importantly, Bremer cancelled the quick hand-over of government responsibilities to the exiled Iraqis that had been planned by the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance.[14]

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[10]Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq*, 339.

[11]Bob Polk, e-mail message to author, October 28, 2012.

[12]James Dobbins, Seth Jones, Benjamin Runkle, and Siddharth Mohandas, *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2009), 28; Tarik Kafala, "Iraqi Baath Party," *BBC News Online*, March 25, 2003. Accessed at: news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2886733.stm on January 23, 2013. The Iraqi Baath party was founded in 1951. The Baathist came to power in 1963 after an army-backed coup. Saddam Hussein was elected assistant general secretary of the party in 1966 and took control in 1968. The party had over 1.5 million members and represented around 10 percent of the population in Iraq. The Baath party was dominated by a narrow group of elite, united by family and tribal ties, not ideology. They used a system of harsh punishments and lavish rewards to maintain power.

[13]Douglas Feith, *War and Decision: Inside the Pentagon at the Dawn of the War on Terrorism* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 354.

[14]Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq*, 15.

There have been various authors who have written about both the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance and the Coalition Provisional Authority. Garner hired Gordon Rudd to be the official historian, and his book, *Reconstructing Iraq*, is perhaps the definitive source of information on the organization. Rudd's central thesis is that, contrary to the popular narrative, there was a great deal of planning that occurred for regime change in Iraq; however, very little of that information benefited Garner or his staff.[15] Paul Bremer also wrote an account of his experience as the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority entitled, *My Year in Iraq*. His book lays out the central political figures in Iraq in 2003 and attempts to refute the narrative that he alone made the decision to conduct de-Baathification and disband the Iraqi army.[16] Douglas Feith, much like Bremer, attempts to use his book, *War and Decision*, to clear himself of any culpability in administration of post-Saddam Iraq. Taken collectively with *Wiser in Battle* the account written by Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, who was the Commander of US forces in Iraq 2003-2004, they provide a holistic account of the difficulties and dangers in attempting to rebuild a foreign nation and establish democracy in the Middle East. Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor have written a series of books on US military involvement in Iraq. Their latest work, *Endgame*, picks up where *Cobra II: the inside story of the invasion and occupation of Iraq* left off. *Endgame* is primarily focused on the "Surge" and how US military forces turned the tide in the Iraq war.[17] Their analysis is helpful in that it relooks at how the decisions made by planners in 2003 led to an environment in 2006 that required a significant paradigm shift in how US forces prosecuted the war, ultimately leading to a switch from conventional tactics to a counterinsurgency model. Condoleezza Rice, the former National

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[15]Ibid., 29.

[16]Paul Bremer, *My Year in Iraq* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2006.)

[17]Michael Gordon, and Bernard Trainor, *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama* (New York: Vintage, 2013), 25.

Security Advisor and Secretary of State, adds an inside account and verification of much of what Gordon and Trainor claim in her book, *No Higher Honor: a memoir of my years in Washington*.[18]

While all of these books provide a glimpse into the trials and tribulations of the key leaders, they do not provide insight into how planning process worked within their organizations. Normally graduates of the School of Advanced Military Studies fill planning positions within division and corps headquarters that are well defined. Everyone on these normal staffs understands their role and how that role fits into the larger organization's structure. For the select few who find themselves in ad-hoc organizations such as the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance and the Coalition Provisional Authority, the roles, responsibilities, and authorities are not as clear. To explore these differences it is appropriate to ask, what was the nature of the planning environment within the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance and the Coalition Provisional Authority?

After receiving a brief from Douglas Feith on what the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance was supposed to achieve in post-war Iraq, Jay Garner quipped, "Marshall had two years…you are giving me two months."[19] In large part because both organizations were built on the fly, neither had time to prepare the structures, processes, or manpower required to fulfill assigned tasks.[20] As a result, the planning environments at both the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, and the Coalition Provisional Authority were characterized by a lack of guidance, organization, and authority, yet the organizations were able to achieve significant accomplishments due in part to the appreciative intelligence, social

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[18]Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: a memoir of my years in Washington* (New York: Broadway, 2011), 75.

[19]Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq*, 4.

[20]Andrew Rathmell, "Planning Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Iraq: What Can We Learn?" *International Affairs* 81, no. 5 (October 2005), 1013-1038.

intelligence, and sense-making skills of many of the planners. Recognition of these problems, and how the staff members sought to overcome them, may influence how the American military prepares its planners for similar roles in the future.

LACK OF GUIDANCE

The first meeting of the main body in Kuwait, it opened with two directives; "Manage your expectations" and "It does not have to make sense--it's policy."[21]

On the third Saturday of February, 2003, barely a month after Garner had first been contacted by Douglas Feith's Policy Planning Office in the Pentagon, The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian attempted to bring all of the parties with a vested interest in post-conflict Iraq together to discuss the planning and assumptions developed by Garner and his staff.[22] Held at the National Defense University, participants included several hundred people who represented virtually every organization in the US government, and became known as the "Rock Drill," because as Garner explained to the participants, they were going to turn over all of the rocks and identify any problems with the plan.[23]

Unfortunately, Bob Polk was unable to attend the meeting, having just been reassigned, and knowing that the organization was less than three weeks from deploying, he used the weekend to wrap up both professional and private commitments so that he could dedicate himself to serving as Garner's planner.[24] Had he been present, he would have discovered that the meeting, which was supposed to work out the final planning details, adjourned without ever answering the

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[21]Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq*,155.

[22]Nora Bensahel et al., *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq* (Santa Monica, RAND, 2008), 59.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Bob Polk, telephone interview by author, Ft Leavenworth, Ks. October 16, 2012.

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most basic questions required for post-war planning. These included, who would provide security? How would the Iraqi military be restructured? Who was going to pay the police and other civil servants?[25] Gordon Rudd, who was at the meeting, adds that the Rock Drill, "failed to take up the most basic question: What sort of future government of Iraq do we have in mind?"[26] The participants at the session did not have the authority to produce answers to those questions, as the answers had to come from the highest levels of the US Government.

The nature of the planning environment at both the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance and the Coalition Provisional Authority was characterized by a lack of guidance precisely because these important questions were never completely answered. The two primary reasons why the planners lacked guidance can be traced to the structure of the US government, and the nature of the problem.

Bradley Patterson author of, *Inside the White House and Beyond*, served in various positions within the White House during three separate administrations. Based on this experience, he argues that the process of forming, coordinating, articulating, and implementing policy has been taken away from the line departments and centralized in the White House.[27] According to Patterson, there are several reasons; one of the most important is that when it comes to problems that require action from several departments, there is no single coordinating body that has the reach or the authority to mandate action from the other departments.[28]

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[25]Bensahel et al., *After Saddam, 64.*

[26]Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq,* 122.

[27]Bradley Patterson, *The White House Staff: Inside the West Wing and Beyond* (Washington DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2000), 10.

[28]Ibid., 15.

For instance, if the Pentagon had wanted help from the Department of Justice in establishing a new police force in Iraq, it could make a request, but it could not mandate that the Justice Department join the effort. Hypothetically, if the Justice Department did agree to help, they most likely would institute reform programs that do not adhere to the desires of the Department of Defense. For example, the Department of Justice may decide that it is much better to focus on a small group of officers, highly trained in western methods of detective work, while the Defense Department wants less skilled, larger bodies of police on the streets conducting patrols. In the end, the Department of Defense has no authority to mandate how the Justice Department carries out its part of the mission.[29]

To avoid the conundrum of departments working against each other in a stove-piped fashion, Patterson argues that the President has five options. He can re-organize the structures, create super secretaries, convene cabinet meetings, concentrate policy development and execution within the White House, or designate one cabinet department as the "lead agency" to coordinate with the others.[30] In the case of Iraq in 2003, the President, prompted by Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, originally decided to use the last option. On January 20, 2003, the President signed National Security Presidential Directive 24, designating the Department of Defense as the lead agency for post-war planning.[31] Patterson argues that the danger in following this course of action is that it often fails to work in practice. Simply designating a lead agency for coordination, he stresses, does not mandate the other departments to fully cooperate. In fact, because the other departments have Congressional mandates on what they must accomplish and regulations on how

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[29]This is a hypothetical example created by the author to demonstrate Patterson's thesis within the context of Iraq.

[30]Patterson, *The White House Staff*, 19.

[31]Feith, *War and Decision,* 286.

they must conduct business, there are often major disincentives to cooperation.[32] In theory, these disincentives are supposed to be overcome by the National Security Council.

As part of the larger National Security Act of 1947, Congress created the National Security Council to facilitate the government's ability to deal with complex problems. Prior to World War II, the U.S. Government dealt with complex problems as individual departments—the State Department, the War Department, the Department of the Navy, and the Treasury—with the help and guidance of the president. As the United States emerged from World War II, with an unprecedented global leadership role, it recognized that the stove-piped approach to dealing with international affairs no longer worked. Instead, global leadership required a combination of diplomacy, economic enticement, and military strength.[33] The National Security Council was created as a means of bringing together the disparate departments under the Executive Branch in order to "mitigate the problems that [arose] from the way the United States Government is structured."[34] The Act did not knock down the stove pipes, but "it did bend them at the top so that the policy thoughts coming from each would come together [within the National Security Council]."[35]

In accordance with Section 101 of Title I. of the National Security Act entitled, *Coordination for National Security*, the purpose of the National Security Council is threefold: To advise the president on how best to integrate foreign, domestic, and military policies of the United States to achieve national security objectives; to assess and appraise the objectives, commitments, and risks associated with the United States' National Security Policy; and to

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[32]Ibid., 73.

[33]Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York, Sentinel, 2011), 317.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid.

review and consider all national security policies that have common interests across the departments and agencies of the government.[36]

The problem with the National Security Council is that it has become something presidents try to work around rather than through. Because a formal meeting of the council carries with it the implied obligation to submit position papers, record minutes, and create a press-release afterwards, recent presidents have chosen to avoid using the council for its intended purpose.[37] In fact, according to Patterson, President William J. Clinton severely curtailed his use of the Council meetings in his second term, choosing instead to use Interdepartmental Working Groups, which could meet discretely and could be created and dissolved as needed.[38] President George W. Bush carried on this tradition in the run-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

In the summer of 2002, the Deputy National Security Advisor, Steven J. Hadley, contacted Franklin C. Miller, a civil servant who worked as the Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Defense and Arms Control Policy, on the National Security Council. Hadley asked him to lead an Interdepartmental Working Group for Iraqi operations. The new group, under Miller, became the Executive Steering Group.[39] The Executive Steering Group's members included senior officials from the Pentagon, State Department and Central Intelligence Agency.[40] The group met twice a week until the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian

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[36]Richard A. Best, *The National Security Council: An Organizational Assessment* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009).

[37]Patterson, *The White House Staff*, 54.

[38]Ibid., 53.

[39]Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq*, 66.

[40]Ibid.

Assistance (ORHA) stood up in January 2003.[41] Issues that the group could not solve were

forwarded to the National Security Council for higher-level guidance. In theory this organization

should have provided a structure for achieving consensus throughout the government, however,

Miller and those that worked with him on the Executive Steering Group, became disenchanted

with the creation of ORHA. Feeling that their efforts were being taken over by Garner, and angry

over the perception that the Department of Defense had cut out the inter-agency process through

National Security Presidential Directive 24, the group's members were unwilling to work closely

with Garner. The lack of cooperation from Miller's group became so contentious, that Garner had

to raise the issue with National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice.[42] Miller and the Executive

Steering Group were not the only ones angered by the manner in which the Department of

Defense dominated the inter-agency process. At the State Department, Secretary of State Colin

Powell, an old friend of Garner's, wanted to help, but many in the State Department felt Defense

had crossed into its jurisdiction with National Security Presidential Directive 24.[43] Had the issue

simply been the inter-agency disagreements over jurisdiction, the National Security Council may

have been able to resolve most of the disputes. However, the problem was bigger than

jurisdiction, and reflected a fundamental disagreement over the policies that should be pursued.

Clear unambiguous strategic guidance was not given to Garner or to the Coalition

Provisional Authority, in large part because the Bush Administration itself was torn between two

competing visions on how it should conduct regime replacement. These competing visions stem

from the nature of the problem of regime replacement in Iraq. In his 2009 article entitled, "War

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[41]Ibid., 105. Frank Miller ended the Executive Steering Group's Meetings in February
2003, when it was apparent that the efforts of the Group had become subsumed by the Office of
Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance.

[42]Ibid., 98.

[43]Ibid., 103.

Planning for Wicked Problems: Where Joint Doctrine Fails," Thomas X. Hammes, a senior research fellow at the Center for Strategic Research at the National Defense University, wrote that military doctrine has been too heavily influenced by the Cold War, where the primary problem was deploying large numbers of men and material. The author argues that as a result of planners focusing on what were structurally complex problems for so long, the military planning establishment as a whole lost the ability to cope with interactively complex problems.[44] These interactively complex problems are also known as ill-structured or "wicked problems." Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, both professors at the University of California, Berkley and pioneers in the field of design methodology, in their paper, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," first defined the nature of interactively complex problems, by contrasting them with problems that could be solved via the scientific method.[45] The difficulty in solving wicked problems starts first with the inability to define the exact problem. Wicked problems almost always exist as symptoms of other problems, within which the relationships are complex and multifaceted.[46] Therefore, there is no definitive means of correctly defining an ill-structured problem. Further, any attempt at defining a wicked problem brings with it a preconceived notion of how to solve the problem.[47]

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[44]T.C. Greenwood and T.X. Hammes, "War Planning for Wicked Problems: Where Joint Doctrine Fails" *Armed Forces Journal* (14 December 2009): 18.

[45]Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Services* 4 (1973): 155-169.

[46]Blackham, "Dealing with Wicked Problems," 36-38. Ill-Structured Problems have five defining characteristics: 1. There is no stopping rule. One can never tell when they have reached sufficient understanding of the problem to stop searching for more understanding. 2. Solutions to wicked problems are not true or false. 3. There is no immediate or ultimate test of a solution for a wicked problem because there is no way of tracing all of the complex multifaceted relationships. 4. Every solution is a 'one-shot' solution. There can be no repetitive experimentation to find the answer because each intervention changes the nature of the problem. 5. Every ill-structured problem can be considered a symptom of another problem. The relationships are complex and multifaceted as opposed to complicated and monofaceted.

[47]T.C. Greenwood, "War Planning for Wicked Problems."

"As a result, experts will honestly disagree on the definition of the problem as often as they do the solution."[48]

That is exactly what happened between Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin L. Powel, during planning for post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction. The Department of Defense, defined the problem of post-Saddam Iraq as one in which the greatest threat was the United States Military Forces being seen as an occupier.[49] Thus, the solution was to hand control of Iraq over to an interim government, composed mostly of exiles, immediately after combat operations ended. The State Department defined the problem of post-Saddam Iraq differently. In State's view, the exiles would have no credibility therefore not be able to maintain control of the government. The real threat was in removing Saddam only to have another dictator take his place. Therefore, the solution in this view was to internationalize the effort to build the foundations of a durable democracy.[50]

Regime replacement by its very nature is an ill-structured problem.[51] As such, each side in the debate could claim primacy of its views and not be wrong. The National Security Council was originally designed in 1947, in part, to resolve these inter-agency problems that result from different departments defining the problem in different ways. However, as discussed above, Bradley Patterson lays out a very convincing argument that the National Security Council does not have the authority, to force the departments to cooperate. Thus, when Bob Polk joined the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance as a lead planner, he joined an

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[48]Ibid.

[49]Joel Brinkley and Eric Schmitt, "Iraqi Leaders Say U.S. Was Warned of Disorder After Hussein, but Little Was Done," *New York Times*, November 30, 2003.

[50]Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 224.

[51]Blackham, "Dealing with Wicked Problems," 36-38.

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organization that was caught between competing inter-agency visions of post-conflict Iraq. The Bush Administration created ORHA with the intent that the organization would bring the inter-agency together, however, in reality, its creation negated the role of the inter-agency Executive Steering Group and deepened the divide between the State Department and the Department of Defense.[52] As a result, Polk and the other planners at both the ORHA and the CPA lacked clear, unambiguous guidance on the most basic question, "What kind of future government of Iraq do we have in mind?"[53] Without such guidance, there was no solid foundation upon which to build all other planning efforts. The manner in which Polk handled this lack of clarity and his consistent drive to press-on despite the apparent futility demonstrated a very high level of appreciative intelligence.

The concept of appreciative intelligence stems from the idea that there are multiple forms of intelligence such as: linguistic, logical-mathematical, inter-personal, and spiritual. In the book *Frames of Mind*, Howard E. Gardner, the John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, argues there is also a meta-intelligence, a form of intelligence that brings together multiple independent intelligences within a single individual to create positive outcomes.[54] Tojo Thanchenkery, The Director of Organizational Development and Knowledge Management School of Public Policy at George Mason University, used this idea and their observations of successful entrepreneurs to develop the concept of appreciative intelligence, which he defines as, "the ability to perceive the positive inherent generative potential in the present"[55] Individuals with high levels of appreciative

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[52]Bensahel et al., *After Saddam,* 23.

[53]Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq*, 155.

[54]Howard Gardner *Frames of Mind, 2nd ed.* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), xi.

[55]Tojo Thatchenkery and Carol Metzker, *Appreciative Intelligence: Seeing the Mighty*

intelligence, according to the thesis, are able to reframe their perceptions, appreciate what is positive in a given situation, and see how the future they desire can unfold from their present condition.[56]

Because there was a lack of definitive guidance on what the Bush Administration wanted Iraq to look like after Saddam, the planners within the organizations charged with creating that end-state lived in an environment filled with ambiguity. Bob Polk and other planners like him were able to deal with this ambiguity because they displayed the four characteristics of individuals with high levels of appreciative intelligence, persistence, tolerance for uncertainty, irrepressible resilience, and a conviction that their actions mattered.[57] As discussed earlier, when ORHA was replaced by the CPA, most of those who worked for the previous organization were either removed by Bremer, or left Iraq on their own, dejected over the fact that the Bush administration had failed to support their effort. Polk remained and by exemplifying the tenets of appreciative intelligence, was one of the few that were accepted by the CPA. Because of his persistence and conviction that his planning efforts mattered, Polk convinced Ambassador Bremer to allow him to implement his unified mission plan, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

There is a popular narrative that has emerged in the decade since the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance was first established, that suggests no one within the Bush Administration thought through the implications of removing Saddam's regime. While it is true that key questions regarding security, military restructuring, police and civil servants, were left unanswered, that does not mean that the issues were not addressed. There were many formal

Oak in the Acorn (San Francisco, Barret-Koehler, 2006), 4.

[56]Ibid., 15.

[57]Ibid.

planning meetings conducted with studies and plans developed throughout the inter-agency.[58] The problem was not that the inter-agency ignored the post-conflict stage or that the inter-agency failed to plan. The problem was that the disparate planning efforts were never brought together because of the structure of the US government, and the nature of the problem. Although NSPD-24 gave the Department of Defense the lead for planning, it was not given the authority to mandate cooperation from other departments. The National Security Council abdicated its role as the consolidator of policy to an interagency working group, which proved largely ineffective.[59] Thus, there was no one within the government who was responsible for coordinating and bringing together all of the interagency pieces required for regime replacement.

Conflict arose between the Defense and State, primarily because of the nature of the problem. Regime change is by its very nature a complex task. Unlike a scientific problem in which there is always only one correct answer, in complex, political and social environments, the answer to a problem largely depends on how decision makers define the problem. Rumsfeld believed that the largest problem for the United States in post-Saddam Iraq would come from the perception of American forces as occupiers. Powell believed the exiles would have little legitimacy and would not last long. Therefore, they believed the largest threat was of another dictator emerging from the power vacuum. Because both sides could convincingly argue they were right, no policy decisions were made, leaving those who had to administer post-conflict Iraq with little guidance.

For planners who find themselves in environments characterized by a lack of guidance, the development of appreciative intelligence is critical. Bob Polk and the other planners within

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[58]Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq*, Chapter 2. The Chapter entitled "Interagency Planning" goes into great detail about all of the disparate papers, studies and efforts that were conducted by the interagency. The question Rudd asks is, why so little of it benefited ORHA?

[59]Bensahel et al., *After Saddam,* 21.

the ORHA were able to accomplish a great deal given that they only had two months to prepare for rebuilding and administering a nation. While many may certainly argue that more should have been done, the fact that they accomplished anything at all demonstrates high levels of the four attributes of appreciative intelligence: persistence, tolerance for uncertainty, irrepressible resilience, and the belief that their actions mattered.

LACK OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Two days prior to the invasion, British Major General Tim Cross went to Prime Minister Anthony C.L. Blair's residence at 10 Downing Street and told the Prime Minister that he had no doubt the invasion would succeed militarily. He told Blair, however, that he feared the organizations charged with conducting post-conflict operations were wholly unprepared and would most likely be incapable of achieving their objectives.[60] As someone who had worked closely with ORHA's lead planners from the very beginning, Cross had unique insight into the planning environment within the organization. This environment was characterized by a lack of organizational structure exacerbated by the physical environment, timing imperatives, and poor information management.

Three months before this meeting with the Prime Minister, Cross's commander at the UK's Permanent Joint Headquarters sent him to Washington, D.C. with instructions to go to the Pentagon, find ORHA and determine whether or not the organization was truly responsible for post-war planning or if it was just a sideshow.[61] Cross's commander chose him for this task based

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[60]Richard Norton-Taylor, "Britain Went into Iraq Unprepared for Aftermath, Chilcot Inquiry Told," *Guardian*, December 7, 2009.

[61]Chilcot Inquiry, *transcript of live testimony of Major General Tim Cross to the Chilcot Inquiry*, London, UK, December 7, 2009. The Chilcot Inquiry was a "Public inquiry into the nation's role in the Iraq War from the summer of 2001 to the end of July 2009, embracing the run-up to the conflict in Iraq, the military action, and the aftermath…to establish, as accurately as possible, what happened, and to identify the lessons that can be learned." From the opening

on his past experience with humanitarian relief in both Bosnia and Northern Ireland. Arriving in Washington, he quickly assessed that ORHA, hidden deep within the bowels of the Pentagon, was not an inter-agency or "trans-beltway" organization as he termed it. What Cross found and reported back to his superiors in the United Kingdom was that ORHA was heavily dominated by a select few from the Office of the Secretary of Defense who possessed, what he believed to be, an over-optimistic plan for quick military victory followed by an immediate transfer of sovereignty.[62] At a luncheon with Secretary Rumsfeld in mid-March 2003, Cross sat at a large table with twenty other high-ranking officials, when Rumsfeld turned to him and asked, "Gen Cross, do you have a view of what's going on?" Cross responded with the same message that he would later tell his own Prime Minister; that militarily, he had no doubt the United States would be successful, but he worried about rebuilding Iraq. Based on his experience in Northern Ireland and the Balkans, he explained to Secretary Rumsfeld that the projected number of troops were sufficient only under the most optimistic post-war scenarios and that there appeared to be no "option B or C," if that rosy scenario did not materialize. Further, he explained to the Secretary that there was a clear disconnect between the United States' desire for the international community to help finance the rebuilding of Iraq, and the "alone and unafraid" stance the United States had taken with the United Nations and the international community. Essentially, he argued that post-war Iraq would require a lot of "time, treasure and talent."[63]

statement of Sir John Chilcot, Chairman of the inquiry. Found at www.iraqinquiry.org.uk accessed on January 31, 2013.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Tim Cross, "Post-Invasion Iraq: The Planning and the Reality After the Invasion, From Mid-2002 to the End of August 2003: A Witness Statement by Major General Tim Cross." Chilcot Inquiry, December 7, 2009. Accessed at www.iraqinquiry.org.uk on January 27, 2013.

Managing that time, treasure and talent, required a robust, internationally-supported organization. Unfortunately, ORHA, from an organizational structure standpoint, was not prepared for the enormity of the task.[64] One of the major reasons why it was unprepared to direct events was because of the physical environment within which it operated. The organization began at the Pentagon on January 15, 2003, then deployed to Kuwait on March 16, 2003. After a month in Kuwait, it moved to Baghdad on April 21, 2003. Each of the three locations offered the organization different physical challenges.[65]

The first physical barrier at the Pentagon was getting through the door. As Major General Cross found when he arrived from the United Kingdom, just getting in the building each day was a significant event. It took nearly three weeks for him to overcome this obstacle, and gain a pass that allowed him to enter the building without an escort. This lack of access for other agencies severely limited interagency interaction. Many from the United States Agency for International Development, State, and Justice that were attached to ORHA simply remained in their own buildings because they could not get into the Pentagon. This lack of easy access to the work environment severely limited the coordination that desperately needed to occur prior to deploying to Kuwait.[66]

Another impediment to those trying to stand-up ORHA was that they had no place to work in the Pentagon. When Bob Polk arrived, several weeks after Cross, there were still only enough offices to house the most senior members. Beyond that small group of senior officials, the rest of the organization had to share desks, chairs, phones, and computers. For those from outside

[64]Editorial, "Leading Article: A Damning Picture Painted by the Chilcot Inquiry," *Independent*, December 18, 2009.

[65]Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience* (Washington D.C., US Government Printing Office, 2009), 35-59.

[66]Cross, "Post Invasion Iraq."

agencies, even if they got into the building, they still could not use the computers or email, making coordination and communication nearly impossible. As a result, information sharing was limited to printing documents and handing them out.[67] Garner believed that by leaving Washington and moving to Kuwait, he could escape the bureaucratic infighting that continued to deny his organization manning and resources. In Garner's mind, once he was in Kuwait, they would have to support him.[68]

Unfortunately, after deploying to Kuwait, the situation did not get any better. ORHA officials were told that Lieutenant General David D. McKiernan, the Land Force Component Commander, did not want civilians near his headquarters and would not allow ORHA to take-up residence on Camp Doha.[69] The official excuse McKiernan gave was that there was no room on Camp Doha for Garner and his staff.[70] Another explanation for the lack of support from the Land Component Commander to ORHA is that General John P. Abizaid, the Deputy US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander, told McKiernan not to allow any organization responsible for Phase IV to distract from the Phase III war-fighting effort.[71] As a result, Garner was forced to move his staff into the Kuwait Hilton, where it rented several beachside villas. Because ORHA

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[67]Robert Polk, email to author, Ft Leavenworth, Ks, August 22, 2012.

[68]Bensahel et al. *After Saddam*, 66. Interestingly, Maj Gen Cross, Garner's "Unofficial" Deputy at the time, advised Garner against leaving Washington, saying, "You should not leave Washington until you have a properly constructed team; if you don't get one, you should not go anywhere." From Cross's Statement to the Chilcot Inquiry. 2009.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Special Inspector General, *Hard Lessons*, 46.

[71]Dayton Maxwell and Robert Polk, interview by Dr Gordon Rudd, Baghdad, Iraq, August 14, 2003. ORHA officials later learned that Abizaid changed his guidance to McKiernan on April 19, 2003. The four phases of military operations are defined as: Phase 1. Planning, Phase II. Preparation, Phase III. Combat Operations, and Phase IV. Stability/Humanitarian/Civil Operations.

never intended to move into the Hilton, they did not bring with them any phones, computers, desks or chairs. Thus, they were essentially facing the same physical problems they faced at the Pentagon but now the problems were compounded by the fact that they were forty-five minutes away from Camp Doha. Extensive, time-consuming security procedures made entering Camp Doha even more difficult than the Pentagon for the civilians.[72] As a result, coordination and communication suffered, occurring most often, only when members of CENTCOM or McKiernan's staff traveled to the Hilton.[73]

After a month at the Hilton, and two weeks after the fall of Baghdad, McKiernan allowed ORHA to move forward to Baghdad. Arriving on April 21, 2003, the organization moved into Saddam's Republican Palace.[74] Polk remembers the palace feeling like a Mesopotamian Versailles, "large, dark, a cavernous rat maze…it was virtually impossible to find the people you needed to talk to."[75] It was hot; there was no running water, and no electricity in the palace for the first 30-40 days. Because they still did not have phones or email, communication required walking around endlessly trying to find someone or leaving a note on their desk.[76]

Clearly, the physical environment affected the organization. Mary Jo Hatch, an organization theorist and professor at the University of Virginia, believes that physical environments have important implications for both the employees that work for the organization and the outside world that interacts with the organization. Hatch's research shows that physical space affects both the amount and type of information shared within an organization. More

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[72]Special Inspector General, *Hard Lessons*, 66.

[73]Maxwell, Polk, interview 2003.

[74]Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *COBRA II* (New York, Pantheon, 2006), 465.

[75]Robert Polk, email to author, August 2, 2012.

[76]Ibid.

importantly, according to Hatch, the physical environment also has a symbolic importance. Physical structures serve as both intended and unintended insights into the organization's culture, status, and importance.[77] ORHA's physical environment within the Pentagon, in Kuwait, and finally in Baghdad, conveyed to others that the organization was not highly regarded by either the military or the senior-level civilians both within and outside of the DOD. Whether that was their intention is debatable. Senior officials such as Secretary Rumsfeld have argued that timing also played a significant role in creating a planning environment that lacked organization.[78]

As was mentioned earlier, Rumsfeld hired Garner only seventy days prior to the start of the invasion. That left precious little time to analyze the environment, understand the problem, decide on an approach, build an organization suited to the approach, and then deploy the organization to Iraq. Lack of available time greatly affected each of those steps and ultimately contributed to a planning environment characterized by a lack of organization.

Contrary to some popular narratives, both Defense and State spend considerable time and effort on planning for post-combat Iraq. To frame the environment, the State Department's Future of Iraq Project brought in Iraqis living outside of Iraq to understand how the environment was formed in its current state and how it may trend in the future.[79] The group forecasted the looting and sectarian violence that followed the invasion, however, that problem was overshadowed by the possibility of a humanitarian crisis, in which the coalition would have to

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[77]Mary Jo Hatch, *Organization Theory* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006), 221-246.

[78]Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 490. Rumsfeld argues that the State Department delayed DOD efforts to pull together an Iraqi Interim Authority for over a year.

[79]United States Army War College, *Campaign Planning Handbook: Academic Year 2012* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa: US Army War College Press, 2012.)

shelter and feed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis displaced by the war.[80] In retrospect, it is not that Garner did not understand the problem; it is simply that he did not have enough time to solve all of the problems. Due to time constraints, he was forced to focus the efforts of the organization on what was believed to be the most urgent problem, which was a humanitarian crisis.

Timing also greatly affected the approach the organization took toward solving problems. Polk's impression, during his first few weeks at the Pentagon, was that the staff was unguided. "Everybody was just trying to get things done, but there was no prioritization or weighting of effort."[81] Initially, he began to gather all of the products the civilians were generating in an effort to learn what was being accomplished and try to start formulating a plan around the work. Within the various civilian agency plans, he knew he needed to find a narrative with which he could rally the ORHA staff.

Due to the pressing timelines, confused priorities, and uncertain organizational structure, this synthesizing of plans would eventually have to wait until ORHA's full employment in Kuwait. When Polk arrived in theater, they recognized the need for a more permanent and automated system to capture, integrate, and redistribute everything the staff was producing independently. That system could then be used to build a flexible master plan that matched staff efforts, and evolved as priorities established by the leadership changed. Essentially, he believed that ORHA needed an information management system, and he set out to try and convince the leadership.[82]

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[80]Bradley Graham, "Prewar Memo Warned of Gaps in Iraq Plans; State Dept. Officials Voiced Concerns About Post-Invasion Security, Humanitarian Aid," *Washington Post*, August 18, 2005.

[81]Robert Polk, telephone interview with author, Ft Leavenworth, Ks, February 27, 2012.

[82]Maxwell, Polk, interview 2003.

Garner retired from the Army before email became prevalent, and could not easily understand the need for automation of any kind beyond the absolute necessity. In theory, he liked the idea, but kept telling Polk, "I like what you're doing, but we don't need this computer-based thing…I need something we can put on the wall now." In Polk's view, this was a reflection of the short-term thinking that plagued the organization from the very beginning. Moreover, Garner continued to reinforce his guidance of focusing only on the first ninety days and nothing beyond. He seemed to be working under the assumption that the organization would not last beyond that period and so there was little use in trying to influence events beyond it. However, as a SAMS trained planner, Polk intuitively felt the organization could not effectively plan within this narrow window without a broader contextualization of the problem. He also felt there was a need to capture and pass on the planning already accomplished, so that the next group would not have to start from scratch. On one occasion, he told Garner's deputy, Retired Lieutenant General Jared L. Bates, "Sir, I know ORHA is leaving soon, but we can hand-off an organization that is better equipped, better capable of handling this flood of information that's still swirling in on us... if you'll make the decision now, the people who are here then, will be thankful for the decision."[83] Unfortunately, Bates did not agree, but that did not deter Polk. Filled with irrepressible resilience and sure that he was doing the right thing, Polk continued to gather information and compile it into an outline for a strategic plan as best he could. He labeled the product of his initial efforts, the *Unified Mission Plan*.[84]

From the very beginning, Polk struggled to define the planning process within ORHA. If he had been assigned to a Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters, as the lead planner, the

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[83]Ibid. The original quote from the transcript of the interview was made more concise by removing repetitive wording. The author verified the edited quote with Polk to ensure it did not change the quote in any substantive way.

[84]Robert Polk, interview with author, February 27, 2012.

planning process and his authorities as the lead planner would have been clearly defined. From previous experiences working on planning staffs Polk understood that the ability to lead any planning process is directly proportional to the access and influence the lead planner has on key leaders. In the absence of a formal organizational structure, the *Unified Mission Plan* became the vehicle he used to gain access and influence with key decision makers. The inspiration came from his desire to build a holistic political-military plan, based on a lines of operations model he had learned about from the US led Kosovo mission, and from a Center for Strategic and International Studies report on post-conflict reconstruction that was published in 2002.[85] Polk even contacted the authors of the plans to seek their guidance.

At one of Polk's first meetings at the Pentagon, he introduced himself to two of Garner's Colonels and started to lay out in broad terms, what he envisioned a political-military plan looking like. It was at that point that Major General Cross overheard what Polk was saying and invited him into his office, saying, "I like what you are saying and I believe in what you are saying, and we really need to do more of this."[86] The problem was that no organizational structure existed to pull the staff together in order to identify and prioritize problems for decision makers, so that appropriate resources could be efficiently allocated to solve the problems ORHA faced.[87] Much of this responsibility fell on Polk's shoulders. Amongst the many competing priorities, the most pressing simply became the need to deploy.

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[85]Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Task Framework* (Association of the US Army and Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 2002.); Rathmell, "Planning Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Iraq," 1015.

[86]Robert Polk, interview with author, Washington DC, March 14, 2012.

[87]Andrew Rathmell, "Planning Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Iraq: What Can We Learn?" *International Affairs* 81, no. 5 (October 2005): 1013-1038.

In Kuwait, Garner's staff began to interact with Joint Task Force 4 (JTF-4), which

Lieutenant General George W. Casey, then head of J-5 Strategic Plans and Policy on the Joint

Staff in the Pentagon, established in late December 2002, because he believed that CENTCOM

had not paid sufficient attention to Phase IV planning. Like ORHA, JTF-4 had little time to

prepare for its task and was given very little support in terms of resources. Because its tasks were

similar, prepare for Phase IV, Garner wanted JTF-4 to fall under ORHA, but bureaucratic turf-

battles prevented that from happening.[88] In the absence of unity of command, Polk convinced

Garner to create a fusion center under which the entire international civilian-military effort could

be coordinated.[89] After several meetings with JTF-4, Polk was impressed by their team of

military planners that had been working on post-war plans for several months. He recognized that

if the fusion cell was going to succeed, it would need the extensive links to robust intelligence

services which JTF-4 had built. In an attempt to expand the depth of his planning staff and its in-

theater linkages, Polk approached and convinced British Colonel Collin J. Boag to switch from

JTF-4 to ORHA. Boag brought with him, his highly trained and knowledgeable staff of military

planners to lead the effort to finish the Unified Mission Plan. Polk pursued this plan even though

he understood it would mean Boag would replace him as ORHA's Chief of Plans.[90] Together,

with the help of several other key civilians such as Dayton Maxwell, a senior advisor in USAID

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[88]Albert Whitley, "Statement by: Major General Albert Whitley CMG, CBE Senior British Land Advisor to the Commander of Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) Kuwait and Iraq from November 2002 to May 2003. And Deputy Commanding General (with particular responsibility for Post Hostilities) DCG CFLCC, February 2003 to May 2003." Chilcot Inquiry, January 27, 2011. Accessed at www.iraqinquiry.org.uk on January 27, 2013.

[89]Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, *Civ-Mil Fusion Cell Proposal*, March 2003. Provided by Robert Polk February 28, 2013.

[90]Robert Polk, email to author, Ft Leavenworth, Ks, August 22, 2012.

working for ORHA, the group produced a two-part plan based on Polk's initial outline, now retitled the *Unified Mission Plan for Post Hostilities Iraq*.[91]

With the completed plan and a change in strategic guidance coming out of Washington, it finally seemed as if the planners in ORHA would be free to move beyond the short-term planning mind-set that had pervaded the organization since the very beginning. Unfortunately, Ambassador Margaret D. Tutwiler, who had taken over strategic communications for ORHA, shelved the plan, because she felt it did not clearly reflect the strategic guidance she was receiving from Washington. All that changed when Bremer replaced Garner in early May 2003. As mentioned earlier, Polk was one of the few who chose to stay in Iraq during the transition and was assigned to Bremer's staff. Within hours of Bremer's arrival, Polk introduced himself and told Bremer about his concepts for long-term planning and the need to create an organizational wide planning staff.

Bremer immediately saw the value and authorized the creation of this staff with Polk and Dayton Maxwell as the lead co-planners. Maxwell would be the senior civilian while Polk acted as the chief planner and spokesperson for the integration of the CPA, coalition military, and various non-governmental mission sets.[92] Polk was invited to all of Bremer's Executive Staff Meetings; so that he could keep abreast of changing priorities, answer questions, and anticipate upcoming planning requirements. In line with his original thoughts in the Pentagon, planning was divided along five lines of action, with a single guiding line of action; the establishment of governance and the return of sovereignty to the Iraqi people, as the main effort. Polk then aligned the goals, objectives, and resources of the remaining lines of action to support the main effort.

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[91]Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, *Unified Mission Plan for Post Hostilities Iraq.* March 2003.

[92]Robert Polk, interview with author, February 27, 2012.

Finally, Polk created a printable, and eventually automated, format of the plan, which Bremer carried in his day-planner and referenced during all major meetings to ensure his decisions were made in accordance with his planning staff.[93] In the end, in addition to his skills honed at SAMS and his previous Corps experiences, much of the credit for the success Polk achieved can be attributed to his high level of social intelligence.

Dr Karl Albrecht, a management consultant and noted author on individual and organizational effectiveness, defines social intelligence as, "the ability to get along with others while winning their cooperation."[94] Albrecht suggests that men and women with high levels of social intelligence display five common characteristics: situational awareness, presence, authenticity, clarity, and empathy. In Polk's journey through ORHA and the CPA, he clearly displayed each of these traits. Situational awareness allowed Polk to recognize deficiencies in his own abilities; even though he was a SAMS graduate, and had held several planning positions, he did not have the tools he needed to build a political-military plan for an organization like ORHA. Thus, he reached out to those who had done the research for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and to the Colonels that were already working in the organization.[95]

Presence is defined as the way you affect individuals or groups of people through your physical appearance, mood, demeanor, and body language.[96] Early on, Polk recognized that the civilians from the State Department did not feel comfortable with the military environment or working directly with members of the military. Because the civilians were responsible for doing much of the heavy lifting in the organization, he knew that he needed to gain their trust, before

[93]Robert Polk, email to author, November 8, 2012.

[94]Karl Albrecht, *Social Intelligence* (San Francisco, Josseybass, 2006), 3.

[95]Robert Polk, email to author, November 8, 2012.

[96]Albrecht, *Social Intelligence*, 69.

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they would help him build the civil-military plan. He describes this effort by saying, "I walked a fine line between showing great deference and humbleness, while at the same time demonstrating my own abilities to take the reigns of this complex planning situation."[97] Polk also found that he gained much more cooperation from the civilians when he was not wearing a uniform. Recognizing this, he eventually gained approval from his superiors to wear civilian clothes because they too realized that there was an unhealthy "us vs. them" attitude developing in the organization.[98] This small but important early initiative came at some cost to Polk in ORHA as the more conventionally minded colonel-level military staff felt like Polk was "going native." Polk persevered and nearly all the active duty Colonel's eventually, voluntarily, took off their uniforms as well to blend more appropriately to the mission profile.[99]

Polk displayed empathy, authenticity, and clarity in the way he dealt with civilians, especially those from USAID. All of the civilians brought into ORHA tended not to want to follow the military as the final authority on the post-combat phases of the mission.[100] They considered this their domain. The most important of these, USAID, already had many "plans" in the form of pre-packaged multi-million dollar contracts across various reconstruction and humanitarian relief sectors. Polk used empathy to understand their views and find common ground. Because he had authenticity and clarity in describing his vision for long-term planning, the members of USAID within ORHA trusted him and worked with him to develop plans that reflected both the military and civilian desires.[101]

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[97]Robert Polk, email to author, November 8, 2012.

[98]Robert Polk, interview with author, Washington DC, March 14, 2012.

[99]Ibid.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Robert Polk, email to author, November 8, 2012.

The physical environment, timing, and lack of information management all contributed to creating a planning environment that lacked organization. Beginning in the Pentagon, in Kuwait, and finally in Baghdad, ORHA consistently lacked the offices, desks, chairs, computers and communications equipment it needed to conduct appropriate planning. Physical separation from other organizations such as the State Department while in D.C. and the CFLCC while in Kuwait further compounded the problems with the physical environment that ORHA operated within. Limits on available time also played a considerable role in creating a planning environment that lacked organization. Recognizing that there was very limited time until the start of combat operations, Garner focused his staff on preparing for the expected humanitarian disaster. The sense of urgency created by focusing on this short-term immediate problem, prevented the staff from looking at the long-term organizational needs of ORHA. One of those needs was an information-management plan. The absence of information management was an additional factor that contributed to the creation of a planning environment that lacked organization. For anything beyond immediate crisis planning, organizations require a planning process that allows them to recognize problems and articulate those problems to decision makers so that resources can be prioritized and allocated toward alleviating or overcoming the problem. ORHA was never able to prioritize efforts or move beyond a 90-day planning cycle primarily because they lacked a unified mission plan.[102]

As the lead planner, what Polk lacked in organizational support, he made up for with social intelligence. Polk recognized early on that to accomplish anything, he was going to need to befriend and gain the trust of the experts and influential people on staff, who knew how to put civil-military plans together. The support of highly qualified men such as Maj Gen Tim Cross, Colonel, now Major General, Colin Boag, and Dayton Maxwell, were crucial to his success. In

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[102]Rathmell, "Planning Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Iraq," 1031.

addition, their willing support of Polk is a testament to his social intelligence. There is an old adage that says, getting things done is all about relationships. Yet very little time is spent at the staff colleges or advanced schools teaching officers the crucial skills required for high levels of social intelligence. Most officers selected for advanced planning positions already have situational awareness, presence, authenticity and clarity. What set Polk apart and allowed him to succeed in an abnormal planning environment was empathy, the ability to understand the perspective of others, and then use that to secure their cooperation in building a plan suitable for all the parties involved.[103]

<center>LACK OF AUTHORITY</center>

In March of 2003, Dr Edward Erickson sat in Major General Raymond T. Odierno's living room, discussing his impending trip to Turkey and the work he would do for Odierno's 4th Infantry Division. The two had been friends since the early 1980s when they worked together as captains. In 2002 Erickson was a civilian teaching social studies until just before the war, when Odierno called him back to service with a by-name-request. The 4th Infantry division was having trouble coordinating their proposed northern invasion route and Odierno knew that Erickson, as a Turkish Foreign Area Officer, had a very close personal relationship with a lot of senior Turkish military officials. CENTCOM cancelled the proposed northern invasion route when it became clear the government of Turkey was not going to budge. Erickson joined Odierno in Kuwait and then moved with him to Tikrit after the invasion, to serve as the division's political advisor.[104]

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[103]Adele Lynn, *The EQ Interview: Finding Employees with High Emotional Intelligence* (Sarnac Lake: AMACON Books, 2008), 54.

[104]Edward, Erickson, Dr. interview with author, Quantico Va, March 8, 2012. Dr Erickson was the only Political Advisor (POLAD) at the Division level in Iraq.

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Soon after arriving in Tikrit, Erickson was called by Major General David H. Petraeus, who asked him to come to come to Mosul and help negotiate with the Turks in his area to form a provincial government. The success of the local elections in Mosul allowed them to expand the elections and the system they were using to select candidates to all of the provinces owned by the 101st Airborne Division and eventually to all of the provinces owned by the 4th Infantry Division as well. When the Marines in Najaf tried to copy what Erickson had done in Mosul and Tikrit, the CPA told them that the conditions in Najaf were not appropriate for an election and that the Marines did not have the authority to hold their own elections.[105] Debates over authority extended well beyond the issue of local elections and pervaded virtually every aspect of Phase IV operations. Because there were no pre-war agreements in place to cover budget control, command relationships and lead planner roles and responsibilities, it can be argued that the planning environment in ORHA and CPA was characterized by a lack of authority.

Real power within most organizations rests in the hands of those who control the budget. Every major decision inside an organization, staffing levels, training programs, technology upgrades, and travel are dependent on the budget process. Budgets force decision makers in an organization to provide purpose and direction to their people to achieve near, mid, and long-term goals, by allocating scarce resources to their top priorities. In a study conducted by the Booth School of Business, at the University of Chicago, which looked at 26 companies, researchers found a direct correlation between management's ability to control their budgets, and the ability of the organization to successfully provide services. In cases where companies did not control

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[105] David Rohde, "Iraqis Were Set to Vote, But U.S. Wielded a Veto" *New York Times*, June 19, 2003.

their own budgets, the opposite was true.[106] The evidence is clear, that when decision makers do not control their own budgets, running an organization becomes much more difficult.

At the organization level, Garner faced this challenge with ORHA. While in Washington, it was very hard to gain support to pay for the organization's budget requirements. In fact, according to Cross, lack of support is one of the reasons Garner decided to deploy to Kuwait, figuring Defense, State, and the National Security Council would all have to support him once he was there.[107] Unfortunately for Garner, the support never materialized, and according to an April 6, 2003 Washington Post article, a $2.5 billion emergency funding request for reconstruction was met with near universal rejection by Congress. Rather than explaining to Congress what the money would be spent on, A senior congressional aide was quoted as saying, "Garner and his team are sitting around a pool in Kuwait drawing up plans."[108] Uncertainty over funding certainly contributed to Garner's unwillingness to allow Polk to plan beyond the organizations immediate needs.

An even greater challenge for Polk as the lead planner, in relation to budgets, was that USAID brought with them fully awarded multi-million dollar contracts across various reconstruction and humanitarian relief sectors. Therefore, the planners in ORHA had little to no say in what the priorities for reconstruction should be or how reconstruction could be used as part of a larger operational plan. Essentially, by awarding the contracts, the direction the organization

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[106]William Bruns and John Waterhouse, "Budgetary Control and Organizational Structures," *Journal of Accounting Research* 13, no. 2 (1975): 177-203.

[107]Tim Cross, interview with author, London, March 28, 2012. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, Garner fought very hard with General Casey over both manpower support and communications support for ORHA. He also urged Secretary Rumsfeld on several occasions to fund a program to hire an initial cadre of police for Baghdad. Frank Miller on the National Security Council also opposed the police initiative. See Rudd, *Reconstructing Iraq.*

[108]Karen Deyoung and Dan Morgan, "Senate Bars Pentagon From Using $2.5B in Emergency Funding for Reconstruction," *Washington Post,* April 6, 2003.

was forced to follow was set, and there was little planners in ORHA could do to change that direction. Later under the CPA, it became obvious that the USAID contracts were in many ways a burden on the organization because they revolved almost entirely around large infrastructure projects, rather than projects that would support Polk's Unified Mission Plan and its eventual primary line of action, returning sovereignty to the Iraqi people. Instead of the large infrastructure projects ORHA and the CPA needed: medical facilities, agricultural development, loans to small businesses, and the rebuilding of local government infrastructure that had been looted during the immediate chaos after the invasion.[109] In the end, lack of budget control contributed significantly toward creating a planning environment characterized by lack of authority.

Confused and ambiguous command relationships also contributed significantly to creating an environment where the planners lacked authority. Up until a point right before ORHA departed Kuwait for Baghdad, exactly who Garner reported to remained somewhat ambiguous. National Presidential Directive-24 directed the Department of Defense to create ORHA in January 2002. Rumsfeld told Garner when he hired him that he would report to US Central Command once he arrived in Iraq in order to maintain unity of command. Unity of command was the underlying argument for National Presidential Directive-24, and therefore, the arrangement made sense in theory. However, in practice, the fact that ORHA reported directly to the Secretary of Defense while at the Pentagon, gave the impression to both the staffs at Central Command and within ORHA that Garner would only report to General Franks for administrative purposes not for direction or guidance.[110]

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[109]James Stephenson, *Losing the Golden Hour* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2007), 89.

[110]Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 487-492.

The issue came to a head in Kuwait when Garner began asking for the various support elements he would need to accomplish his job once in Iraq: military police, engineers, civil affairs and others. General Franks believed that in order to maintain unity of command, Garner needed to fall under Lieutenant General McKiernan, the Unified Land Component Commander. Additionally, because McKiernan owned all of the assets Garner needed, it made sense from a practical perspective as well. What did not make sense to Colonel John F. Agoglia, a SAMS graduate and Central Command's lead long-term planner for Iraq, was that Garner did not bring with him the information that Central Command planners so desperately needed from decision makers in Washington; answers to questions such as what kind of government does the United States want, who is going to be in charge, what is the currency going to be, and what conditions need to be met before the United Nations will remove the oil export ban?[111] For Agoglia, without those answers ORHA provided little value and their presence in-theater only diminished the idea of unity of command. While Franks had the authority to place Garner under McKiernan, he did not have the authority to turn off Garner's direct line of communications to the Secretary of Defense.[112] Naturally, with two distinct reporting chains, one leading through McKiernan to the Franks, and the other one by-passing Central Command all together, going straight to the Secretary of Defense, determining who had the authority to make decisions became both confusing and contentious.

This confusion and contention spilled over from the general officer level and manifested itself as well within the planning-staff, where the environment was also characterized by a lack of authority. From the very beginning, Polk wanted an established lead-planning role similar to what Agoglia had at Central Command. He wanted Garner to tell him what the mission was and then

[111]John F. Agoglia, interview with Gordon Rudd, Baghdad, June 28, 2003.

[112]Ibid.

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announce to everyone else that Polk was the lead planner and that they needed to get with him to start planning.[113] Because that never happened, there were many people, especially on the civilian side of ORHA that did not understand what Polk's role was or how they were supposed to interact with him. Lack of time prior to deploying to Kuwait and the fact that there was no information-management system, served to compound the problem. As a result, under ORHA, Polk lacked the authority to effectively take what the civilians were working on and translate their needs into requirements that the Land Component Commander's planners could then use to allocate resources.

Shortly after ORHA arrived in Kuwait, Agoglia flew from Central Command's forward headquarters in Saudi Arabia to Kuwait to help introduce the ORHA staff to McKeirnan's staff. He had hoped to be there before the two planning groups met for the first time. Unfortunately, his aircraft was delayed and by the time he arrived after the first day of the conference, the two groups were completely at odds over who was in the supported versus supporting role. The ORHA planners believed that they should be supported by the Land Component because they had been created by a presidential directive and held a direct line of communication to the Secretary of Defense. Planners on the Land Component staff pointed out that General Franks placed ORHA under their operational control and therefore, ORHA should be in a supporting role. The conflict between the two planning staffs led to angst and frustration, weakening their ability to work together. Agoglia was able to resolve some of the conflict on day two of the conference by clearly stating that General Frank's guidance was for ORHA to assume a supporting role. For Polk, this transition meant that many of the assumptions ORHA was using in its planning, such as support from the Land Component, were no longer valid. Overcoming this setback and continuing the

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[113]Robert Polk, email to author, August 2, 2012.

process of building a unified mission plan required what organizational theorist Karl E. Weick termed sensemaking.

In its most basic form, sensemaking is the ability to make sense of things during times of extreme uncertainty, ambiguity and surprise.[114] According to Weick, sensemakers are able to see clearly when others cannot because they rely on three attributes: improvisation and bricolage; an attitude of wisdom; and respectful interaction.[115] In Kuwait, ORHA faced uncertainty over how long the war would last and the conditions they would find in Iraq at the end of combat. Additionally, the planners faced ambiguity in the guidance they were given over what the organizations was supposed to accomplish. Finally, there was complete surprise when they found themselves subordinate to the Land Component Commander. Polk was able to deal with this and make sense of the environment by relying on improvisation, wisdom, and respectful interaction with others. Even if it meant giving up power and position voluntarily for the overall good of the mission as he had done by inviting Colonel Boag and his staff to join ORHA.

When ORHA first arrived at the Republican Palace, the physical setting was much worse than the Pentagon or Kuwait, in addition to not having desks, chairs, computers and telephones, which had been their plight from the very beginning, they now also had no electricity or running water. Where others were willing to simply give up or declare that nothing could be done until their supplies arrived, Polk improvised for what they did not bring with them by going downtown Baghdad, purchasing office furniture for the planning staff and creating a "war room" in the

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[114]Karl Weick, *Sensemaking in Organizati*ons (Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 1995), 181.

[115]Karl Weick, "The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organizations: The Mann Gulch Disaster," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (December 1993): 628. To this list, Weick adds a fourth attribute, the ability to form virtual role systems, however, it that attribute was focused specifically on fire crew in his analysis of the Mann Gulch Disaster.

palace.[116] Once he had a feasible office environment to beginning planning, Polk recognized the need to reach out to experts such as Colonel Boag from JTF-4 and Dayton Maxwell from USAID. Through his respectful interaction with these individuals and others, he was able to gather a second source of ideas. In discussing and debating their ideas, they developed intersubjectivety, on what the problems were and how they should be approached. Finally, through these partnerships, he was able to strengthen his independent assessment that successful reconstruction of Iraq required a unified action plan to guide the efforts of the organization.

Polk's sensemaking skills of improvisation and respectful interaction with others enabled them to create and sell the concept of the unified mission plan to Ambassador Paul Bremer; another man who was also attempting to make sense out of an environment constantly filled with uncertainty, ambiguity and surprise. In many ways, the CPA had less of a need for sensemaking than ORHA because President Bush did a better job of setting Bremer up for success by appointing him as the Presidential Envoy to Iraq on May 9, 2003, with full authority over all government personnel, activities, and funds.[117] Thus, Bremer exercised much greater control of his budget, and the command relationships, while not perfect, were much clearer. What Bremer did not have, which the press continued to point out, was a sensible plan that convinced the Bush administration the CPA was capable of managing Iraq and transitioning the country to a democracy.[118] Polk, and those who worked with him, provided Bremer the final piece he needed to make sense of what was going on in Iraq. Bremer used the enhanced unified mission plan as the document he briefed to President Bush, his administration, and Congress, on how the

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[116]Robert Polk, email to author, August 2, 2012.

[117]Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, 12.

[118]Mike Allen and Glenn Kessler, "Changes in Iraq Effort Debated; Ex-Secretary of State Baker May Be Asked to Help Bremer," *Washington Post*, July 26, 2003.

Authority planned to allocate its time, energy, and resources toward the goal of returning sovereignty to the Iraqi people. In many ways this plan perfectly reflected Weick's assertion that sensemaking is built on vague questions, muddy answers, and negotiated agreements; all used in an effort to reduce confusion.[119]

The planning environment at ORHA was characterized by a lack of authority because the organization lacked control over its budget, command relationships were confused, and the lead planners roles and responsibilities were ambiguous. The creation of the unified mission plan in Kuwait was an initial attempt to make sense out of an environment filled with uncertainty, ambiguity, and surprise. Rejected by ORHA, Polk and Maxwell, sold the idea to Bremer who also needed to make sense of what was happening in Baghdad and explain that reality to the Bush Administration in Washington. Used in this manner, Polk's unified mission plan, now called, "*Achieving the Vision to Restore Full Sovereignty to the Iraqi People*," became the ultimate expression of sensemaking because it clearly showed the way forward in Iraq was not about making good decisions based on clear questions and clear answers.[120] Rather, restoring full sovereignty was going to be a process guided by vague questions, muddy answers and negotiated settlements.

CONCLUSION

The question the paper answered was, "what was the nature of the planning environment within the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance and the Coalition Provisional

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[119]Weick, "The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organizations," 640.

[120]Coalition Provisional Authority, "Achieving the Vision to Restore Full Sovereignty to the Iraqi People (Strategic Plan)," working document as of October 1, 2003 (Baghdad, Iraq).

Authority?" This paper definitively showed that the nature of the planning environment in ORHA and the CPA was characterized by a lack of guidance, organizational structure, and authority; and that appreciative intelligence, social intelligence, and sensemaking, are the skills SAMS graduates will need when they find themselves as the lead planner for an operation in some far corner of the world that few have ever heard of and even fewer can find on a map.

For ORHA, the lack of guidance stemmed directly from structure of the US government and the nature of the problem. The Executive Branch is structured so that in theory, when two departments disagree on how to carry out a national objective, the National Security Council can act as a mediator to ensure the there is one unified plan coming from the administration. The problem is that although differences between departments can be voiced at the National Security Council, the council has no authority to force individual departments to act in a manner contrary to their self-interest. NSPD-24 gave the Defense Department the lead for planning post-conflict Iraq, yet the National Security Council was unable to reconcile differences between Defense and State in a manner that would allow the two organizations to work together in a unified manner. The root of the disagreement between the two departments was largely caused by the nature of the problem. Regime change is by its very nature a complex problem. Unlike a scientific problem in which there is always only one correct answer, in complex problems the answer largely depends on how you define the problem. The Department of Defense believed that the largest problem for the United States in post-Saddam Iraq would come from the perception of American forces as occupiers. The State Department believed the exiles would have little legitimacy and would not last long. Therefore, they believed the largest threat was of another dictator emerging from the power vacuum. Because both sides could convincingly argue they were right, no policy decisions were made, leaving those who had to administer post-conflict Iraq with little guidance.

The physical environment, timing, and lack of information management all contributed to creating a planning environment that also lacked organization. ORHA's physical separation from

the agencies and organizations it needed to coordinate with, along with the fact that the organization consistently lacked desks, chairs, computers, and communications equipment it needed to conduct appropriate planning contributed to a lack of organizational structure. Lack of available time meant that ORHA was never able to move beyond immediate crisis planning and develop plans beyond ninety days. The sense of urgency created by focusing on this short-term immediate problem, prevented the staff from looking at the long-term organizational needs such as an information-management plan. Without an effective means of gathering and disseminating information organizational structure suffered. Decision makers were unable to prioritize the resources and manning needed to achieve the goals of the organization.

Lack of budget control, confusing command relationships, and ambiguous lead-planner responsibilities also contributed to creating a planning environment characterized by an absence of authority. Lack of budget control led directly to authority issues for key decision makers and planners within ORHA, in that they were unable to allocate resources in a manner that matched their strategic objectives. Because organizations such as USAID brought with them pre-awarded multi-million dollar contracts, planners in ORHA and CPA had no authority to modify those contracts to support more modest reconstruction projects designed to support the goal of returning sovereignty to the Iraqi people. The command relationships between ORHA and the land component remained confused for months, until being clarified just prior to entering Iraq. Polk and many in ORHA believed that because they were a Presidentially-appointed organization with a direct reporting chain to the Secretary of Defense, the land component should be placed in a direct supporting role to ORHA. Ultimately, General Franks decided that for unity of command reasons, there could be only one commander in Iraq and his choice was the land component commander. The result was that ORHA did not have the authority to task the land component to provide the military police and civil affairs units required to accomplish ORHA's mission. Because the organization's level of responsibility remained in limbo for so long, Garner was

unwilling to look beyond the first 90 days. This in-turn created ambiguity over the role of the lead planner. The civilians within ORHA, whose tasks all went well beyond the first ninety days, did not understand why they needed to coordinate their requirements with an Army lieutenant colonel who was only tasked with planning for the first 90 days. Unlike a military planning staff, where the role of the lead planner is clearly defined, within ORHA, Polk did not have the authority to mandate the civilians coordinate their plans with him. Thus, even though he made an effort to create an automated database and a unified mission plan for ORHA, he was unable to gather all of the organization's individual requirements and prioritize them against a holistic plan.

This paper also showed that despite the lack of guidance, organization, and authority, Polk and other planners were able to accomplish a great deal through their application of appreciative intelligence, social intelligence, and sense-making. It is these skills that will most likely be required by future planners who find themselves in hybrid organizations facing complex problems.

For planners who find themselves in environments characterized by a lack of guidance, the development of appreciative intelligence, and its four attributes of: persistence, tolerance for uncertainty, irrepressible resilience, and the belief that their actions matter, is critical. Polk's refusal to leave Iraq with the rest of the ORHA staff demonstrated irrepressible resilience, and tolerance for uncertainty. The fact that his concept for a unified mission plan became the guiding document for the CPA, and was subsequently briefed to the President and Congress showed that Polk had tremendous persistence and understood that his actions mattered. Polk's social intelligence, most importantly empathy: the ability to understand the perspective of others, and then use that to secure their cooperation in building a plan suitable for all the parties involved; is what allowed him to team so effectively with other key members of the ORHA staff such as Dayton Maxwell, Major General Tim Cross, and Colonel Colin Boag. Without the ability to see the problem from the perspective of each of these key individuals, and then integrate those

perspectives into his own thinking, Polk would never have been able to garner their support for his idea of a unified mission plan. Finally, an important skill for any planner who finds himself in an organization that lacks guidance, organization, and authority, is sense-making: the ability to reduce confusion in environments where clear answers to clear questions are unavailable, and the guiding principles come from vague questions, muddy answers, and negotiated agreements.

As we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, it is important to study the lessons learned by the men and women who faced almost insurmountable odds in trying to plan for and execute the rebuilding of Iraq after major combat operations. Iraq certainly is not the first conflict the United States has entered without providing those charged with securing a better peace, clear guidance, proper organization, and authority, nor will it be the last. While SAMS graduates can do little to change the structure of the US government or the nature of the problems that lead to a lack of guidance, organizational structure, and authority; they can better prepare themselves to operate in these environments by sharpening their skills in appreciative intelligence, social intelligence, and sense-making. It is these skills that allowed the planners in 2003 to overcome the insurmountable odds, and it will be these skills that enable future planners to do the same.

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